

"4th of July Number"

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 19, No. 7

July 1951

Whole No. 226

YOUNG WILD WEST

By J. Edward Leithead

Whoever thought up the name of the hero of Wild West Weekly, back in 1902, had picked a sure winner for Frank Tousey, publisher. What avid reader of the Western tale could pass by the adventures of one with such a glamorous title? Evidently not many could, for Wild West Weekly had a total of 644 issues before they started reprinting the stories from #2, the reprints continuing until it reached a grand total of 1296 issues in 1927.

How Young Wild West came by his name was explained at various times throughout the series: as a baby he was found on the scene of an Indian massacre by a troop of cavalry, the commanding officer giving the orphan his own name, West, adding "Young" for obvious reasons and "Wild" because the time and place were exactly that. He grew into a youth of "medium height, handsome of face, and with the form of an Apollo." He was the Champion Deadshot of the West, and Prince of the Saddle, too. He could outshoot any badman, bandit or rustler, above or below the Rio Grande, outrope and out-ride any cowboy on any cattle range, out-slash any raiding Sioux or Comanche or Apache in a knife duel, and he did it all with a coolness which excited our admiration, remarking as his target hit the dirt and the smoke drifted, "I reckon that will be about all." His silk-fringed buckskin suit linked him to the fabulous Old West, source of our most cherished Western traditions, though one author in particular sought to bring the stories a little closer to the present by saying it happened "a few years ago, when the vast region known as the Wild West was in a rather unsettled condition."

Wild, as his friends called him, struck it rich in No. 2 of the Weekly, Young Wild West's Luck, or, Striking It Rich in the Hills, and good fortune came to him many times thereafter, so that he had no money worries while in pursuit of excitement and adventure in the "wildest parts of the great West." He was always ready with the helping hand, always for the under-dog, a bit of character business which made him solid with readers who were also in search of the second-hand adventure thrill. Although there were eight traveling companions in the party which roved ceaselessly from the Canadian border to the Rio Grande, five of them played the principal parts: Wild himself, his sweetheart, Arietta Murdock, his partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, and a Chinaman, Hop Wah, one of two brothers, the other being Wing Wah.

Arietta, the golden-haired, was Wyoming-born and raised. "She had been brought up to ride a horse and handle a rifle or pistol, and she was as expert at it as the average cowboy or hunter." She needed to be expert, considering the outlaw gangs and Indian raiders they encountered on the plains and in the mountains. Often she was in a tough spot where she couldn't shoot her way out and had to be rescued. But Wild had taught her, "Keep

cool, Et," and she usually kept her head. Arietta was the one to whom the other women of the party, Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie (who seemed not to know that his surname was "Watson" until late in the series) and El-oise Gardner, Jim Dart's sweetheart, looked to for guidance when trouble hit their camp. Occasionally all three girls would be carried off by outlaws or Indians, then it was spurs and quirts and a furious chase by the men of the party. This reader, for one, especially favored stories in which Arietta was featured—usually every other issue, with her name in the sub-title—and she looked pretty on the covers, mighty pretty.

Cheyenne Charlie, one-time Government scout and Indian fighter, was the eldest of the three partners, a rather vociferous type, and liked a drink now and then. But he seldom or never disputed the Champion Deadshot's judgment, agreeing with, "Right you are, Wild." Jim Dart was a quiet Westerner, short on talk but on hand when needed, and like Wild, taking a cigar when the drinks were set out in gambling saloons they visited.

Hop Wah was a gem of a character, innocent-looking but possessing amazing ability in certain lines, talking pidgin English, and easily spotted by cowpunchers and miners and badmen inclined to be a little rough. While he was no great shakes with a gun, he had other methods of handling unfriendly souls who would have hogtied him with his own pigtail. Marauding Indians found him too hot to hold. With home-made fireworks in the pockets of his blouse, he upset more than one Indian village with a pyrotechnic display, either escaping the redskins himself or causing a diversion to aid the rescue of another member of the party. And he was that slick at cards one would have thought he invented them. Also a sleight-of-hand performer. "Tangle-foot," his name for whiskey, was his favorite beverage. My grandmother, quite an old lady in the heyday of Young Wild West, always borrowed my copies of the weekly to find out "what old Hop was doing this week." Wing Wah was cook for the outfit and a faithful worker, but had none of his brother's cleverness.

These five characters I have spoken of at length appeared together on the front page of Happy Days in 1909, when No. 1 of Wild West Weekly was reprinted serially, beginning in Happy Days No. 786. They were highly valued companions of my boyhood, along with the heroes of the other nickel libraries I read regularly. After finishing one, I would look at the title of next week's issue and wonder what the picture cover would be like, and I was never disappointed. Like all Tousey publications, great attention was given to putting an attractive cover on every issue of Wild West Weekly. Thanks are due the artist, whoever he was, and to Sinclair Tousey, as I believe he was head of the firm from 1902, his brother Frank having died about that time. One of the cigar stores where I bought novels had a huge, continual window display of them, hung by metal clips on long wires, and no matter how many were sold—and plenty were, of course—there were always new

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

Vol. 19, No. 7

July 1951

Whole No. 226

Published Monthly at

821 Vermont Street, Lawrence, Kansas

Edited and Published by

Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

"Application for entry as second-class matter is pending"

Price \$2.00 per year

Ad Rates — 6c per word, \$1.00 per inch, quarter page \$2.25, half page \$3.00
and Full Page \$5.00. — 4 times for the price of three.

ones to take their places. Below, on the flat surface of the window, were all the latest thick-book type of novels published by Street & Smith and Westbrook. I never failed to stop and look, even if I wasn't going in to buy. Another cigar store, on my way to school, had a large display board outside (there was a sheet-iron awning overhead clear to the curbside to keep off the rain) and every new novel, Street & Smith or Tousey, as issued, appeared on this display board each week, so that I usually made daily visits to stand and look at the latest fascinating covers, even of those novels I didn't care so much for, sometimes lingering so that I just reached school as the last bell was sounding. Two other stores, at no great distance, dealt only in second-hand novels, where you could buy two for a nickel or trade two used copies for one.

There was good variety of Western adventure in Wild West Weekly. In one issue, Wild and his friends would be out with the U. S. cavalry, fighting Indians, the next week they'd be on a cattle range, tracking down rustlers, the issue following would find them in a mining-camp, mixing smoke with badmen or ore thieves or claim jumpers, and the issue after that the faithful traveling companions might be up against train or bank robbers, perhaps road agents, either American or Mexican. And they made frequent trips into Old Mexico. Wild owned a cattle ranch in Texas—Buckhorn Ranch—which was the scene of numerous adventures. In his absence, the outfit was managed by Hoss Thompson, who, with his wife, Stella, always gave the travelers a warm reception. Another stopping-place was Weston, in the Black Hills, named for Wild, where he had mining interests, and old Sam Murdock, Arietta's grandfather, was postmaster. The town of Weston even got into the titles, No. 441 being Young Wild West's Weston Welcome, or, Arietta's Birthday Gift (a gold-mounted rifle, if I remember correctly).

As in so many of the old novels, there was an equine character in Wild West Weekly that deserves special mention—Spitfire, the sorrel stallion owned by Wild (he broke Spitfire to saddle in the very first issue of the weekly). Spitfire outraced a prairie fire in No. 210, Young Wild West Daring Death, or, How the Sorrel Saved Arietta. Regarding the authors who wrote of Wild and his friends, the early stories were by H. K. Shackleford, Lu Senarens and Lurana Sheldon, but the later and greater number of them were from the pen of Cornelius Shea.

A boyhood pal of mine, who read Wild West Weekly nearly as often as I, nevertheless complained now and then that Wild won out too often and too easily, said he'd like to see him come a cropper just for variety. I still remember how eagerly he paid his nickel for a copy of No. 414, Young Wild West Almost Beaten, thinking Wild had more than met his match this time. After my friend had read it, I asked, "Well, get your wish?" He shook his head and grinned. "No. The bad bunch didn't really come within a mile of beating him, and I guess I like him best the way he is."

Alliteration was always the fashion in dime and nickel library titles, and Wild West Weekly was strong for it. Here are samples:

- Young Wild West's Prairie Pioneers (#81)
- Young Wild West's Buckskin Brigade (#86)
- Young Wild West Cowing the Cowboys (#149)
- Young Wild West Paying the Pawnees (#162)
- Young Wild West's Branding Bee (#190)
- Young Wild West Corraling the Comanches (#211)
- Young Wild West's Bucking Bronchos (#220)
- Young Wild West Saving the Soldiers (#236)
- Young Wild West Beating the Boomers (#240)
- Young Wild West's Bareback Beat (#249)
- Young Wild West Doomed to Death (#274)
- Young Wild West's Gallop for Glory (#277)

Young Wild West Commanding the Cavalry (#307)
 Young Wild West Trimming the Trailers (#311)
 Young Wild West Roping the Ranch Raiders (#313)
 Young Wild West "Salting" the Salters (#316)
 Young Wild West Catching the Claim Crooks (#321)
 Young Wild West Stopping a Stampede (#360)
 Young Wild West Showing Up a Sheriff (#382)
 Young Wild West Grilling the Gold Grabbers (#396)
 Young Wild West and the Trapped Troopers (#417)

Some that had unusually striking cover illustrations were:

Young Wild West After the Arapahoes (#239)
 Young Wild West at Greaser Gulch (#244)
 Young Wild West and the Sioux Scalpers (#246)
 Young Wild West's Box of Bullion (#248)
 Young Wild West at Fire Hill (#250)
 Young Wild West at Skeleton Ranch (#252)
 Young Wild West and the River Rangers (#257)
 Young Wild West and the Moqui Medicine Man (#259)
 Young Wild West and the Navajo Chief (#267)
 Young Wild West Exposing the Express Robbers (#270)
 Young Wild West's Ripping Round-up (#287)
 Young Wild West and the Indian Traitor (#290)
 Young Wild West and the Ranchero's Daughter (#292)
 Young Wild West and the Sand Hill "Terrors" (#293)
 Young Wild West Routing the "Ghost Dancers" (#299)
 Young Wild West Crossing the Dead Line (#300)
 Young Wild West at the Cowboy "Kick-up" (#312)
 Young Wild West's Fight on the Plains (#318)

With No. 433, the style of the covers changed and were not, from there on to the end, the equal of those that had gone before. In No. 633 began a series dealing with Young Wild West's Wild West Show in Europe and the First World War. These ran for twelve issues, the last one being the last original story in the weekly. After that the reprints. During the publication of the weekly in the 500's, several stories were reproduced in the silent movies by the Nestor Film Company. Two of them were No. 509, Young Wild West's Prairie Pursuit and No. 510, Young Wild West and the Texas Cowboys. There was an announcement on the cover that they had been made into motion pictures. I never saw them. I don't suppose the youth of today would go for the adventures of Young Wild West and his inseparable companions, but maybe the later generation has missed out. Any magazine that can hold its readers' interest with one set of fictional characters for as long as Wild West Weekly lasted, undeniably has something.

THREE CHUMS—The Forgotten Weekly by Julius Hassenfeffer

Browsing through the copies I have of the little gem, the Reckless Ralph Roundup I do not seem to have any that give any mention of that nickel thriller diller Three Chums. However by referring to the Roundup Index, a swell item to have as our good friend Geo. Flaum got it together after what must have been a mountain of research, here I find that the birthday number of Roundup, 1938, made some mention. This precious issue never reached my lily white hands so am unable to note how much space was given. I'll take it for granted it said very little so those Roundup Brothers who also may have muffed it let's slide along and see what I can do about refreshing your memory.

This periodical did not have a very long span of life, but when it appeared

hanging in a window alongside of my other favorites it struck my young mind as the nuts. The date on No. 1 was Nov. 10th, 1899. It ran for exactly 60 issues, written by some galoot who no doubt used a pen name, Harry Moore (Ed.—real names H. K. Shackelford and Cornelius Shea.) Good old Harry finished the set and came out with what proved a more popular series, the Liberty Boys of 76. The first issue was dated Jan. 4th, 1901. That sure was my pet and written in such a simple style a five year old monkey could have enjoyed reading same. But back to the Three Chums.

The stories dealt with Ben Bright No. 1 hero, Tom True No. 2 and Dorothy Dare. Ben in some respects outdid our friend Frank Merriwell. Dorothy was a dainty dish to have around, in fact she was the kind of a dish where there was no need to pass the mustard. Between her and Inez Burrage who finally married Frank, those two flossies could get into more jams where the author had to keep Frank and Ben handy to save them from dire consequences.

Now when No. 1 appeared hanging in a small store window my heart sure must have skipped a beat or two. I have a photo of it in front of me, in fact I have photos of the entire set that were loaned to me by good old Reckless and Harold Holmes, the latter poor fellow now under the daisies and unable to pursue the joys of his childhood. So there it was and with my baby blue eyes resting on this new treasure, how to possess same was the problem. The only way possible was waiting for Grandmaw to be out of sight some place so a nickel could be withdrawn from her well worn pocketbook. I didn't know so much about sticking up a bank at that time or things might have been much easier. In later years when I was head man during the robbery of the Brinks million dollar episode I could have had a library today that would far outclass anything Bragin, Caldwell or even Reckless Ralph has stacked away. To think that 51 years have passed since I saw No. 1, where oh where have those years flittered to?

An artist gazing at the Mona Lisa or some other masterpiece surely never got more of a thrill out of a picture than I did of that cover which showed Dorothy coming down a dusty road on a bicycle, a demon of the highway in those days, said bike completely out of control and her yelling her pretty head off to be saved. It wasn't on a hill either and I wonder why she just didn't step off. But no, Ben had to stand there in all his manly strength with arms outstretched to rescue the fair maid from a terrible disaster. Behind Ben stands Tom True to back him up, and in background a flock of helpless students from the Raymond Academy, too petrified to do anything but gawk. The title under the picture as it usually was on all those nickel libraries read—quote—"Ben braced himself and when the girl was within twenty feet of him he cried, 'Leap into my arms, I will save you.' Quick as a flash Tom True sprang behind Ben to catch and sustain him. Unquote—Oh brother.

After what seemed like a month to me, No. 2 finally rolled around, yep Grandmaw to the rescue again, and here we see a sure enough railroad station, only a few planks showing, but I figgers it must be because there was a train about to pull out. A startling scene takes place. Conductor on platform, uniform and all seems scared stiff, Ben has a villian by the coat collar, students gathered around, with Dorothy standing behind Ben with an umbrella, why I dunno, it wasn't raining, maybe to brush off some freshie by soaking him on the noggin. The caption—quote—"Not so fast Dan Denny, I want to have a talk with you, you will have to wait for the next train"—end of quote. I forget what Dan did, but it must have been something mighty dastardly.

Now Ben like the Merriwells and other five cent heroes always had some black-hearted villian to contend with. Without em the author sure would have been in a fine mess for plots. So like snakes, mosquitoes and other liv-

ing things that make the life of humans miserable, the good Lord put em on earth for some purpose. In Ben's case at the start and in quite a few numbers McMaster was the bad egg. He was a student at the Raymond Academy—maybe they had a special course there for villians, because he was well educated in that line.

No's. 3-4-5 and 6 were covers devoted entirely to the football field. These were nothing unusual except No. 6, there me lads you had something to put your teeth in. Merriwell may have been a wonderful athlete, but Ben sure showed up Frank something out of this world. The photo shows Ben upside down flying over the heads of the opposing players, and the caption, now get this—"Ben gathered himself when a few feet from the goal tender, made a wonderful leap into the air, and turning a complete somersault above the astonished fullback's head, lighted squarely on his feet ten feet beyond and was across the goal line like a flash." Unquote—Wadda man, wadda man. In Tip Top Weekly No. 194 Merriwell also took a flying leap in the Yale Gym. Over the head of Buck Badger, but with head up, the caption read Suddenly Merry took a flying leap over Buck Badgers head and fairly sailed into the air. Those guys never needed aeroplanes.

No. 7. Three Chums Accused, or the Burning of Raymond Academy. Here the three began to get into their stride. Now considering what they knew at their age, I wonder just why did they have to go to school. Fred Fearnot was another apple who always knew more than anyone else, even when he entered Avon Academy. Anyway this No. 7 also had a swell cover as only the Tousey artists knew how to stick it over on us young gullibles. Here we see the Raymond Academy in full glow, flames shootin all around and Ben coming down a ladder with both arms wrapped around a student he was saving, for a wonder no dame this time, just a measly male. He faces forward and no doubt his third hand which is not shown holds onto the ladder. Crouching behind a wall on the right is McMaster and from the caption he must have been the one who got a hold on a match some place and set it ablaze. I give you the caption. "Outstretched hands were willing to receive Ben and his unconscious burden, while McMaster with sullen face and clinched fist looked up. 'He's beaten me again, he muttered, BUT WAIT.'" As Lew Vezie in Tip Top would say, what a dweadful cweatcher.

Grandmaw again unknowingly helped me to get a strangle hold on No. 8. Now here is where many of the libraries had their heroes go in for the stage. Every hero, Merriwell, Fearnot, Phil Rushington of Do and Dare Weekly became actors. All their productions, with a few pit falls here and there to make it interesting were a mountainous success. No actor today could touch em, they wouldn't want to. The cover in case some brother has a copy without shows a scene on stage. Suspended by hooks fastened at the seat of his pants is a new villian. He hangs in a very hoo-miliating position over the heads of the cast. This must have been the work of Little Punn who was the comic through the series. Harry Moore must have dug deep into Joe Miller's joke book for the gags Punn did. Now this new villian went under the name of Oglethorp, and if he didn't feel like murdering Ben then, this must have done the trick. The title, Three Chums At Work, Or, Getting Ready for the Road. Ye caption.

"Patsy gave a signal and the scene shifter in the loft hove away at the windlass and hoisted Oglethorp kicking and struggling into the air. 'Sure and thats pwhat yes get fur tryin to make maches on the gurls instead of spakin as yur pieces, begorra,' muttered Patsy in huge delight."

Then No. 9 heaved in sight, and without the help of Grandmaw, Grandpaw had some cash stacked away it soon was in my possession. This number without the aid of the photo looms in my memory. In this Oggie again tries his dirty work. In this apparently a side street showing a small ship, and upstairs Oggie must have rented a room minus running water. At Oggie's

window this monster is seen holding in his hands an old fashioned wash basin, about to drop it upon the head of our Ben who stands below with arms folded across his manly chest after he had knocked into a cocked hat some ruffian who was picking himself up from the sidewalk. A crowd stood nearby enjoying a free fight. How Ben escaped this awful situation I forget, but he wound up hale and hearty in No. 10, so no doubt Oggie muffed the target. The title, Three Chums Success, Or The First Production of their Play. Title under photo—Leaning out of the window, Ogglethorp held the bowl poised for a few moments and then gritting his teeth the would-be murderer let it go, and down it shot true as a bullet straight for the head of Ben Bright. Fellers don't it make yer blood run cold?

So I could go on and on, but I ain't gunna do it. No use wearin you fellers to a frazzle and me too. However I might call attention to where we skip to No. 53. Here the Three Chums, still intact start on a world cruise. It starts with Three Chums Exploring, Or 1000 Miles Up the Amazon. Followed by Egypt, Africa, China, Cuba and wound up in No. 60 in Greece. That was an interesting series and gave us young uns a bit of edacation. In the final number wherein we never found out who finally married the Gal Dorothy leaving us high and very dry, hmm I could stand a snort right now—Three Chums in Greece Or Taking Part in the Olympic Games. The title under photo was a slam bang hum dinger.

"The Greek Charioteers tried hard to beat Bright, but the young American handled the reins with consummate skill. Just at the proper moment he began plying the whip and forged ahead rapidly, won the Chariot race, the event of the day."

So there brothers you have some of the highlights of this forgotten weekly. Thanks to Reckless and Harold Holmes for allowing me to have the library in my possession long enough to recall on film what thrilled me at fourteen. Yep, those two galoots plus Grandmaw and Grandpaw sure gave me hours of pleasure.

NEWSY NEWS by Ralph F. Cummings

Arvid Dahlstedt had a fine window display at "The Berkshire Courier" newspaper office for the week of June 7th, 1951. He also had a fine newspaper article in the Berkshire Courier, Great Barrington, Mass., on "Stories of Dime Novels," Thursday, June 7th. No picture, just the article, on various novels such as Frank Reades, Old Caps, Diamond Dicks, Beadles, and what not. A very good article.

See J. Edward Leithead's fine article on Young Wild West. There's very little that was ever written on this hero, same goes for Three Chums in this issue. Ed Leithead has also sent in a fine long article on "Old Time Boys Books," that I'll have to run as a serial in the Roundup as it's too long for one issue. It's a very fine article, like all his articles are.

Frank Wilson of Melrose, Mass., and a San Francisco book man that's just got back from Korea, were here June 23rd and June 25th Jack Neuburg of Boston, Mass., and Mr. Carpenter who had a book store at 633 Massachusetts Ave., sold to Jack, were here.

John Ball reports that his mother passed away Feb. 17th. God bless her always. Never had a sick day in her life. Please accept our sincerest sympathy of us all, Pard.

There's a fine article on "The Frank Leslie Publishing House," by Madeleine B. Stern in the Antiquarian Bookman for June 16th, 1951.

Fred P. Pitzer, Harry Weill and Bill Claggett sent me a nice bunch of clippings—some of them I can use in Roundup from time to time. Thanks a lot fellers.

We are trying to put the Roundup thru by second class mail so every one will ge their Roundup quicker than they have been getting it.

W. H. Waldrap says: Popular Western magazine for Nov. 1940, started a series of fine stories of BUFFALO BILLY BATES, who was supposed to have been trained in Indian Warfare by Buffalo Bill himself. And Buffalo Bill appears in some of the stories. I don't know just yet how long this series of stories ran, but they surely made fine reading, (and still do, as I am getting me a collection of them.)

The latest word from Street and Smith, regarding the reissuing of the Buffalo Bill stories, is that due to the increased interest in western and cowboy literature, they are now re-considering all previous decisions regarding this matter. Which means, that they are thinking very strongly of reprinting all of these good old stories. If they really get behind this idea, and get out these stories along with making pictures, then Hopalong Cassidy won't have a chance.

Harry M. St. Clair of Baton Rouge, La., is now at P. O. Box 57, Clinton, Ind. He's been very sick this past winter, but is feeling better now, also Wm. M. Claggett.

Mrs. Dorothy R. Russo, of the Indiana Historical Society, 140 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis 4, Ind., wants information on the pen name of "An Old Trapper," "A Self Made Man," and "J. Perkins Tracy." They want to know if all three of these pen names belonged to Maurice Thompson? As they are making up a bibliographical study they are completing for publication next year, and is concerned with a group of Crawfordsville, Ind., authors, and will, of course include the Thompson brothers, Maurice and Will H. Any information on

this author, please send to Mrs. Russo. "Miller's Dime Novel Authors—1860-1900" show they do, but they want to make sure.

Albert Johannsen's summer address from June 1 to Oct. 1 is 'Lincolnshire', Crete, Illinois. The Florida address is for winter. He writes "I am keeping up the listing of dime novel newspaper items, such as are given in the Appendix to the Beadle book. Some day I may get out an appendix or supplement of a few pages. I am glad to see that you list newspaper items as they come out, but I wish you would always give title, by whom, date, and name of periodical. Usually you do, and always you give a few words as to what the articles are about."

TIP TOP WEEKLY

Bought, sold and exchanged

A large stock on hand, many in the very early issues. Take this opportunity to increase your files of the Merriwell stories. Prices reasonable. All correspondence promptly answered

J. P. GUINON

Box 214

Little Rock, Ark.

"SIDE NOTES"

An occasional paper about old books, old printing types, penny dreadfuls, Toy Theatres.

J. A. Birkbeck

51 Marchmont Rd., Edinburgh 9
Scotland

NOVELS WANTED

Send List, description and price.

George Flaum

206 Prospect St., Newark, N. Y.

FOR SALE

Have large accumulation of novels, New Magnets, Adventure Libraries, "Algers (paper and cloth), other thick books, old Argosys, Blue Book Magazines, etc., etc. Many Pluck & Luck (including 1645 to 1605 with lots of duplicates), large reprints and originals; many Work & Win, Fame and Fortune, Secret Service, and others. Do not wish to list each item, nor pack and ship, so if any brother is interested and lives near enough to come and get them, will not refuse any reasonable offer. Please write or phone Boyertown 7-2392 before coming, so I will be sure to be home. Will have new address about August 15.

KENNETH MEADWAY

206 W. Sixth St.

Boyertown, Pa.